

CIA front

CONSTANTINE FitzGibbon, one-time US intelligence officer and author of *When The Kissing Had To Stop* and *The Shirt of Nessus* (the one about the bomb plot on Hitler) is a mild academic looking character of American Irish extraction. But his views on the totalitarian threat to your liberties and mine are anything but mild. FitzGibbon's latest work, *Secret Intelligence In The Twentieth Century* (Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, £6.95), out this week ends with an unfashionably conservative denunciation of the CIA (it is incompetent rather than all powerful in a period when we need protection from the Russians) and a warning that Labour MPs, trade unionists and journalists include more than their share of Soviet agents.

FitzGibbon was expelled from Wellington (the school not the town) in 1935 for being a Communist. He spent the following year studying in Munich where he befriended an SS man just back from underground work in Russia. SS man — to his horror — pointed out just how far Russia and Germany could go in harness. From then on Mr FitzGibbon took a more jaundiced view of the politics of totalitarianism.

Today he is convinced that the Russians are seriously considering the physical destruction of the entire United States rather than its conquest and conversion to communism. "After their experience with an Independent Communist China they are deliberately destroying Angola and Cambodia. There is no sentimentality about them — they'd be perfectly happy to destroy Chicago. They don't want a technologically powerful America — even as an ally."

FitzGibbon, quoting the Bay of Pigs and US failures in Asia and the Middle East, says he has considered the possibility that the CIA — "it is so incompetent there must be a reason for it" — is really a front to mislead the Russians. Behind that front there is another US intelligence agency — "Do you know what the NSA does without any publicity at all?" — which soldiers on defending the West with secrecy and success. He has also toyed with the idea that *detente* was really part of a Kissinger/Brezhnev plot to divvy up the world between them.

On balance Mr FitzGibbon says he has abandoned both theories. But he can't resist one last crack at Dr K. "Kissinger said that he believed in the ultimate triumph of communism and that his own task was to hold it off for as long a possible. When the Kissinger had to stop, some of us called it. And it has."